

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 were pending in the patent application. By this amendment, Applicant has canceled Claim 2 and 7, and has added new claims 11-16, which parallel limitations already found in claims 3, 4, 6, and 8, and which introduce no new matter into the application. No additional filing fee is required.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-4 and 10 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over the Burgess in view of Tada; Claim 5 as unpatentable over Burgess in view of Tada and Bates; Claims 6-8 as unpatentable over Tada in view of Burgess; and, Claim 9 as unpatentable over Tada in view of Burgess and Reed. For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully contends that the claims are patentable over the cited art.

The present application teaches and claims a system and apparatus for indicating user status for at least one of a plurality of users of groupware, the user status indicating whether the user has accessed the document and being viewable by all of the users of the groupware. The invention includes means and steps for tracking user status and displaying the user status in a status row bar in a view

window at the display of each user of the groupware. All users of the groupware can check the user status for all other users of the groupware.

The Burgess patent is directed to a system and method for a single user to check whether or not he has read a file. Burgess provides a user bitmap which comprises a snapshot of each file with a bitmap code (i.e., a file status indicator) which tells the user whether or not he has read a file. The Burgess user can only view file status for his own files.

The Tada patent is directed to a server-based document storage and retrieval system with document registration and authorization tracking. Tada provides an access control table for groups, which indicates whether a document can be accessed by members of a group. If a user who is requesting a document is a member of an authorized group, then the user can obtain access to that document. If the requesting user is not a member of an authorized group, the server will not retrieve the document for the user.

Both the Burgess and the Tada patent systems store document information. Burgess stores file status information indicating whether or not the file, or document, has been read. Tada stores document authorization

information. Neither patent teaches or suggests storing user information indicating that a user has actually accessed a document. The present invention expressly teaches and claims that user status indications are stored, where user status indicates whether or not the user has read the document. Moreover, the present invention provides that every user of groupware can access the user status indications, not simply the user himself (as in Burgess).

With specific reference to the claim rejections, Applicant first disagrees with the Examiner's statement regarding claim 1 (found at the bottom of page 2 of the Office Action), that Burgess provides user status. Burgess provides document status (read/not read). Moreover, Burgess does not provide document status for a plurality of users of groupware. Rather, Burgess shows document status to only the one user who has or has not read the document. It cannot be maintained that Burgess displays user status for a plurality of users of groupware.

The Examiner has acknowledged that the Burgess patent does not relate to groupware. Therefore, the Examiner has cited the Tada patent as teaching "a system wherein at least one of a plurality of users is of groupware". Applicants respectfully disagree. The Tada patent does teach that

groups of users, for example all professors and students at a university, can obtain access to stored documents. Allowing users who belong to groups to retrieve documents is not the same as or suggestive of "groupware." The term "groupware", as detailed in the Specification in the first paragraph of the background section, is a term of the art which has a specific meaning. "Groupware" does not mean any data which can be accessed by a member of a group. Rather, "groupware" is collaborative software which allows multiple users at different locations to simultaneously view, alter, and comment on displayed data. There is nothing in Tada which teaches or suggests the use of groupware.

Applicant respectfully asserts, moreover, that even if Tada did teach groupware, the provision of a Tada access table with a document indicator as to which groups of users can retrieve a document still would not obviate the invention as claimed. If one were to modify the Burgess patent with Tada, one would arrive at a single user system which would indicate "read", "not read", and "not accessible", although it is not clear how one would modify Burgess's bitmap to include a document if that document was not accessible. One would not arrive at the inventive method and program storage device for performing the method

as claimed in Claims 1, 3, 4 and 10 including the steps of displaying a status row bar in a view window of each user of groupware and providing a status indication, including user status showing whether the user has accessed the document, in the displayed status row bar, said status indication being viewable by all of the plurality of users of the groupware (Claims 1, Claims 2-4 which depend from Claim 1, and Claim 10).

With regard to Claim 3 and newly presented Claim 13, which recites that the users are divided into groups and the status indication shows what percentage of the users of each group have read each document, Applicants disagree with the Examiner. The Examiner has cited the teachings from Burgess at Col. 2, lines 12-15 and the teachings of Tada at Col. 2, lines 35-40 and Col. 3, lines 25-30. None of the cited teachings mention groups of users of groupware. Moreover, none of the cited passages teaches or suggests percentages of users from different groups who have actually accessed a document. Tada does discuss groups of users, any one of which can retrieve a document; but Tada does not teach groupware, does not teach user status indications, and does not teach calculating and displaying percentages of users in a group who have actually accessed a document.

With regard to Claim 4 and newly presented Claim 14, the Examiner cites Fig. 8 of Tada and the teachings found at Col. 2, lines 12-20 of Burgess. The Burgess patent teaches that read/not read status is maintained for each document, document status and not user status. Burgess does not teach or suggest maintaining collective status information for a group of documents. Rather, Burgess shows one document indication for each one document in a group of documents. What is taught and claimed is a collective indication which encompasses multiple documents wherein one or more of the grouped documents has not yet been read and many may well have been read. The addition of Tada teachings to Burgess would not obviate Claim 4 since Tada is teaching user groups and group member authorization to access documents. The Tada patent does not teach grouping documents nor does it teach providing indicators for grouped documents.

With regard to Claim 5, while the Bates patent may show the use of colors or patterns for displaying linked nodes, the addition of Bates to a combination of Burgess and Tada would not obviate the claim language, since none of the references teach or suggest creating a status indication indicating actual user status regarding accessing a document

and displaying the status indication for all users of groupware.

Claims 6 and 8 have been rejected as unpatentable over Tada in view of Burgess. Accordingly, the Examiner proposes modifying Tada with Burgess. Applicants respectfully assert that it would not be logical to modify Tada's server system of indicating group authorization to access documents with the Burgess client-based single user bitmap showing whether a document has been read or not by the one user. Since Tada maintains a server-based access table, specific user information would not logically be maintained. Moreover, once Tada determines that a user is a member of a group which is authorized to access a document, Tada retrieves it and delivers it to the user, hence it is necessarily read. If a user is not authorized to access a document, under Tada, the user does not get the document. Burgess designations of "read" or "not read" are simply not relevant to the Tada authorization and retrieval steps. Tada does not teach or suggest tracking authorized or unauthorized attempts at access.

Regardless of whether it is logical to modify Tada with Burgess, Applicant contends that the invention as claimed in Claims 6 and 8 would not be obviated by the combination.

Claim 6 as amended recites an apparatus for indicating user status regarding access to at least one document of groupware for at least one of a plurality of users of groupware, the user status indicating whether the user has actually accessed at least one document of the groupware, said apparatus comprising a server connected to a network comprising a status determining component for determining user status and a status database for storing a user status indication and at least one display device for displaying the user status indication viewable by all users of groupware. Again, Applicant notes that Tada does not teach groupware. The Tada patent does not teach or suggest tracking and displaying user status. Tada maintains group authorization information for each document. Nothing in Tada teaches or suggests tracking actual user access for display to other groupware users.

With specific reference to Claim 8 and to newly added Claim 12, which both recite, when a user changes said document, the statuses of the other of said plurality of users are set to "not read" in said status database, Applicants assert that the cited patents do not provide any teachings or suggestions of the claim language. Neither Tada nor Burgess maintains user status. Burgess only

maintains bitmaps for a single user. Tada only maintains group authorization information for each single document. Neither patent teaches user status for one user, let alone for multiple users of a document. Further neither patent teaches that the user status of multiple users be updated based on alteration of a groupware document by a single user.

Finally, with regard to Claim 9, which additionally recites sending mail to users who have not read a document, it is clear that one having skill in the art would not look to modify Tada, or Tada and Burgess, with the Reed mail teachings. Since Tada does not track groups or track users of groups, Tada could not provide a mailing list of users from groups who had authorization to read a document but who had not read it. Burgess only tracks the single user's reading of local documents. Burgess would not logically be modified to have the single user e-mail himself to remind himself to read an un-read document. There are simply no teachings in the cited patents which would lead one to modify the cited patents in such a way as to arrive at the invention as claimed.

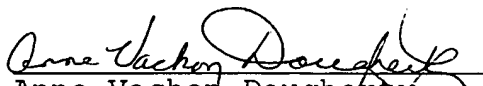
Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments,

reconsideration of the amended claim language in light of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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